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AUTHORITY

AGO D/A ltr, 29 Apr 1980

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

IN PRIORITY REPORT TO
AGAM-P (M) (12 Jul 68) FOR OT RD 682211 22 July 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 52d
Signal Battalion, Period Ending 30 April 1968 (U)

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FOR OT RD, Wash. D.C. 20310

1. Subject report is forwarded for review and evaluation in accordance with paragraph 5b, AR 525-15. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT RD, Operational Reports Branch, within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.
2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Kenneth G. Wickham

KENNETH G. WICKHAM
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 52D SIGNAL BATTALION
APO San Francisco 96215

SCCVSG-VD

10 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 52D Signal Battalion for Periods Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFUR-65 (E1)

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1. Section 1. Operation: Significant Activities.

a. General: Emphasis during the reporting period was directed at increasing the battalion communications services to the supported headquarters at Corps, Division and Sector level within the battalions mission capability. The 52D Signal Battalion mission is to: "Establish, operate and maintain communications facilities in support of USMACV Advisory Teams in the ARVN IV Corps Area, Mekong Delta, Republic of Vietnam." Responsibilities encompassed within this mission are as follows:

- (1) Access to the Army Area Communications System from each sector headquarters.
- (2) Common user telephone service at sector headquarters.
- (3) Common user secure teletype message center and cryptographic services at sector headquarters.
- (4) Secure teletype services at sector headquarters using HF radio.
- (5) An HF SSB voice radio net operation among the advisory team at IV Corps Headquarters and the Advisory Team at Division.
- (6) An FM secure voice radio net operation among the advisory team at IV Corps Headquarters and the Advisory Team at each Division.
- (7) The IV Corps advisory termination for HF radio and special purpose circuits of MACV.
- (8) Secure telephone service to Corps and Division Advisory Teams. The battalion accomplishes all of the above responsibilities with the exception of para 1a(6) and 1a(8). Many of the mission responsibilities are not

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accomplished in total, for example; a few of the sectors have HF radio teletype and no secure VHF teletype while other sectors have VHF teletype and no HF radio teletype. A secure means for page copy teletype messages does exist to each sector. As equipment, personnel, billeting and messing facilities become available the battalion will complete it's mission services to the supported units.

b. Systems installation and upgrading continued to be of extreme importance within the 52D Signal Battalion's area of responsibility, the IV Corps Tactical Zone. Emphasis on systems installation was directed to the 44th Special Zone.

(1) Utilizing one (1) AN/MRC-54 and one (1) AN/MCC-6 two (2) multichannel VHF communications links were established from the 44th Special Zone Headquarters; one between Cao Lanh and Long Xuyen (AAH60) to provide more direct access to Chau Doc and the other between Cao Lanh and Moc Hoa (AAH61) to provide a direct communications path between the Special Forces "B" Team (B-41) at Moc Hoa and the 44th Special Zone Headquarters.

(2) One (1) AN/MRC-69 was moved to Vi Thanh to establish a VHF system (AAH52) from Rach Gia. The system was activated on "A" Band frequencies on 8 March 1968. A great deal of testing and changing of equipment was required during the latter part of February and early March to increase the system power and settle it for use.

(3) The program for upgrading existing VHF systems quality incorporates the following functions:

(a) Installation of G-Line at the Gia Rai relay to attempt improvement of the 77UHB8 system. Two (2) AN/MRC-69 and one (1) AN/MRC-54 was moved to Ca Mau, Gia Rai and Bac Lieu and a parallel AN/TRC-24 system established to replace the present AN/GRC-50 system.

(b) Installation of AT-880 corner reflector antennas are being placed on systems as required. The corner reflectors have already been installed on the following systems:

1. Long Xuyen - Sa Dec (AAH53)
2. Sa Dec - Vinh Long (AAH48)
3. Sa Dec - Cao Lanh (AAH49)

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(c) Rehabilitation, realignment and testing of all AN/GRC-50 equipment in the Battalion. The program started on 30 March 1968 in Can Tho and was completed by 14 April 1968.

c. 6 February 1968 the Battalion assumed the responsibility for the area communications facility at Dong Tam, supporting the American 9th Infantry Division. The site was staffed with personnel from 52D Signal Battalion resources and immediate actions were taken to upgrade communications.

(1) The advanced party of 15 EM from the 52D Signal Battalion arrived at Dong Tam on 6 February 1968. By 11 February 1968 all the 588th Signal Company, 36th Signal Battalion personnel had departed Dong Tam with the exception of 8 EM who were nearing their DEROS. It was determined that the site required fifty two (52) personnel to efficiently operate. Immediate difficulties were experienced, because of the hasty organization of personnel and the lack of past experience as a operating team, in the smooth accomplishment of the communications mission. These personnel have rapidly learned the need for team work.

(2) Overall the equipment left at the Dong Tam site by the 588th Signal Company was in fair condition. The switchboard and frame equipment (AN/MTC-9) is old and in need of extensive rehabilitation. Assistance was received from Headquarters, 2D Signal Group to accomplish the necessary maintenance to bring the board up to operating standard.

(3) The major portion of the Dong Tam outside cable plant is above ground and will continue to be extremely susceptible to mortar and small arms damage. During the Tet offensive the cable plant received extensive shrapnel damage and required numerous repairs by the 267th Signal Company. Cable to be installed in the future will be placed underground and as much of the existing cable as possible will be placed underground.

(4) On 26 February 1968 at approximately 1700 hours the communications tower at Dong Tam fell. Two (2) personnel from the 327th Signal Company were mounting AN/TRC-29 parabolic antenna dishes on the tower when one of the up-rights, presumably weakened by shrapnel, gave way. The personnel fell with the tower, but were uninjured. The Battalion requested assistance from 2D Signal Group and on the night of 26 February an attempt was made to fly a new tower into Dong Tam. This flight could not be made because of concentrated artillery fire south of Saigon. The tower was flown into Dong Tam on 27 February 1968 and installed by 2D Signal Group. As an interim measure multi-channel communication was reestablished using tactical communications masts and antennas.

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(5) The communications site at Dong Tam required relocation temporarily so the Engineers could add approximately 3 feet of fill to level the site with the surrounding terrain. During the past year, the Dong Tam complex has been built up around the communications site leaving it in a depression. To accomplish the above, the site is being shifted approximately 60 feet from it's present location to allow room for the engineers to work. A T-shape building will be constructed at the base of the communications tower, and the VHF and carrier portion of the building constructed first. This will be a 32 foot long structure forming the top of the "T" shaped building. Once the VHF and carrier facility is completed, construction will start on the building to house the communications center, technical control, signal maintenance and the company operations. This will complete the "T" shaped communications facility.

d. During March, one (1) AN/MGC-17 teletypewriter central office was moved into position at Cao Lanh for activation of a secure teletype circuit from Can Tho to Cao Lanh. For temporary secure teletype service to Moc Hoa and Chau Doc agreements have been made between Headquarters, 52D Signal Battalion and Company D, 5th Special Forces to utilize the Special Forces existing radio teletype circuits to these two (2) sectors.

e. Cable damage was extensive throughout the IV Corps Tactical Zone with extreme damage to cable at Vinh Long, My Tho, Dong Tam, Can Tho and Soc Trang during the Tet offensive. On the spot splicing, repairs and replacement of cable was accomplished in the majority of cases by the 40th Signal Battalion, 267th Signal Company and a few splicer personnel from the 52D Signal battalion. To preclude, or at least reduce cable damage in the future, as much of the cable as possible is being placed underground.

f. To provide additional communications circuits and higher quality circuits the 77UMV1 microwave system from Can Tho to Vinh Long was extended to Dong Tam. The project was accomplished in 3 phases:

Phase I: Exchanging circuits between the AAW69 (army area system from Can Tho to Vinh Long) and the 77UMV1 (Can Tho to Vinh Long). This was accomplished on 12 and 13 March 1968.

Phase II: Establishing a 24 channel system between My Tho and Dong Tam. Additional equipment from Battalion resources were required to establish this system. One (1) AN/MRC-54 and one (1) AN/MCC-6 was transported to My Tho to establish the system on 22 March 1968.

Phase III: Required extending circuits from the 77UMV1A leg at Vinh Long to Dong Tam on the newly established microwave system 77UMV1B. This required the dropping of 8 each channels at Vinh Long and rerouting circuits from the

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AAW73 system on to the 77UMV1B (VLG - DTM). Circuits were also extended on the AAW74 system to My Tho. The upgrading of communications improved circuits between Can Tho, Dong Tam and My Tho.

g. The Battalion plans to operate five (5) secure radio teletype nets within the IV Corps Tactical Zone. The radio teletype nets are the IV Corps, 3 Divisions and the 44th Special Zone Operations and Intelligence nets. To date the following has been accomplished:

The IV Corps O & I Net is in operation with the NCS at Can Tho Airfield. Active stations in the net are the 7th, 9th and 21st Infantry Divisions (ARVN), 44th Special Zone, Rach Gia, Tra Vinh and the two major airfields, Vinh Long and Soc Trang. Vinh Long, Soc Trang, Rach Gia and Tra Vinh RTT stations will eventually become stations in their respective division O & I nets. The AN/GRC-26D radio stations were installed at Rach Gia, Tra Vinh and Cao Lanh during the months of February and March.

h. Although the new Can Tho area communications center, located at the Can Tho Airfield, is a great improvement over the small communications center that was operated from the Headquarters, IV Corps compound, problems were still experienced. Message back logs, misrouted messages and excessive handling times were experienced all to often. During the months of February and March there was a tremendous turn over of communications center personnel. The majority of the 72B's assigned had no previous experience with the operation of a fixed station communications center. To overcome these problems the following was accomplished:

(1) Two (2) Lieutenants were assigned to the communications center platoon. One (1) for day shift and one (1) for night shift.

(2) A Warrant Officer was assigned to the communications center.

(3) The internal operating, handling, accounting and delivery procedures were analyzed by the Company Commander and the Battalion S-3 and corrective actions were taken.

(4) Assignments of adequate 72B communications center personnel.

i. The Battalion continued to conduct training in the operation of the AN/GRC-106 Single Sideband radio during February, March and April 1968. The Battalion also conducted 45 hours of mandatory training and sent personnel to communications technical training courses.

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(1) The Battalion AN/GRC-106 Single Sideband radio course continued operations throughout the Tet offensive as directed by 1st Signal Brigade. During February, March and April five (5) courses were completed. The dates were:

- (a) 5 - 9 February
- (b) 19 - 23 February
- (c) 4 - 8 March
- (d) 18 - 22 March
- (e) 15 - 19 April

(2) To develop the ability of the average radio operator and communications site personnel on generator trouble shooting techniques, a generator maintenance course was conducted by the Battalion Generator Maintenance Technician. The classes were conducted at the respective battalion communications sites so the majority of personnel would benefit from the instruction. The objectives of the course were to develop the site chiefs' and operators' ability to perform preventive maintenance, diagnose the causes of generator malfunctions and express, in understandable terms over the telephone, symptoms determined during the diagnostic check.

j. Company A, 52D Signal Battalion opened a consolidated mess hall on 1 May 1968 in Can Tho, RVN. The mess hall will feed all HHD and Company A personnel. A great deal of coordination and leg work was required by Company A, the 52D Signal Battalion and 2D Signal Group to insure the proper equipping and staffing of the facility.

2. Section 2. Lessons Learned: Commander's Observations, Evaluations, and Recommendations.

a. Personnel: None

b. Operations:

(1) Keeping abreast of the situation.

(a) OBSERVATION: In many instances, units and agencies are spread throughout a city or a military installation. During periods of hostilities these unit and agencies need information on the situation to determine their movement and postures.

(b) EVALUATION: Many units are not TO&E authorized tactical radios to allow them to monitor a local security net. Telephones are not the most reliable way of disseminating information in a large area, first because as

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experience has shown communications cables may be sabotaged and cut by mortar shrapnel and second because excessive calls to the TOC's needlessly tie up operations duty personnel.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That a AN/TRC-24 transmitter using "B" Band tuning head be installed in the vicinity of the local tactical operation centers. The "B" Band frequency range is comparable with the standard commercial FM radio which can be purchased or obtained by any unit or individual. Necessary information of significance can be immediately transmitted by the TOC duty personnel.

(2) Trouble shooting oversight

(a) OBSERVATION: In many instances when a multichannel radio AN/TRC-24 system goes off the air due to malfunction, the operator changes major components over and over again without locating the problem.

(b) EVALUATION: Even when the operator sets an indication that a piece of major equipment is faulty he should change the interconnecting cables. Cables used over a period of time often develop intermittent opens, which hampers trouble shooting and in many cases is the problem.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That radio, carrier facilities maintain a 100% back up of interconnecting cables and that the cables be immediately changed on every equipment malfunction. The cables which are removed must be checked for continuity. Note while checking the continuity of the cable each pin connector should be wiggled. The cable should be repaired if necessary or given a clear bill of health, tagged and prepared for future use.

(3) Damaged Coax Cable

(a) OBSERVATION: During recent enemy attacks this unit has experienced considerable damage to coaxial cable leading to and from transmitting and receiving antennas.

(b) EVALUATION: Shrapnel from exploding mortar and rocket shells has caused damage to exposed coaxial antenna cable. This has resulted in the temporary loss of critical communications systems.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Company D of this battalion suffered damage to coaxial cable during a recent attack. Due to a shortage of cable it was not possible to install all new cable. The personnel of this company got their communications back on the air by putting a T joint on each end of the remaining good cable. Both the transmit and receive signals were passed over the single good cable. While the signal was not optimum they were able to pass traffic.

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(4) Buried Cable

(a) OBSERVATION: Extensive and repeated damage has resulted to overhead multipair cable in areas experiencing frequent mortar attacks.

(b) EVALUATION: Units of this battalion have experienced many circuit outages due to shrapnel damage to multipair cable suspended along telephone poles.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Although the installation problems would be greater it is felt that communications would be more reliable if multipair cable was buried wherever possible. Most of the communications outages suffered by this battalion have been a result of local cable damage. This could have been long eliminated had the cable been buried. This is particularly true in areas receiving frequent and intensive enemy fire.

c. Training: None

d. Intelligence: None

e. Logistics:

(1) Keep a POL reserve

(a) OBSERVATION: During periods of stepped up aggression in the Mekong Delta, military supply routes were blocked by the Viet Cong and aircraft were involved entirely in combat essential flights. POL resupply during these periods to communication sites becomes extremely difficult.

(b) EVALUATION: Communications becomes extremely important during periods of stepped up aggression and communications sites have gone off the air due to lack of POL.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That close coordination be effected with the local Logistic Support unit to insure regular resupply of POL products and that remote sites maintain a 15 day reserve of POL products on hand at all times.

f. Organization: None

g. Other:

(1) Stairways for Two Story Barracks

(a) OBSERVATION: Congestion of personnel evacuating two story barracks.

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(b) EVALUATION: During recent mortar attacks it has been noted that congestion of personnel is likely when attempting rapid exit of frame two story barracks. This undesirable situation occurs as a result of the fact that stairways leading from the second floor feed directly into the path of people exiting from the ground floor building exits.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: The stairways at each end of the barracks should be changed so that the flow is away from the ground floor exit. The 52D Signal Battalion has submitted a drawing of such a proposal to the Airfield Commander, Can Tho Army Airfield.

(2) Location of Personnel Bunkers

(a) OBSERVATION: Two story frame barracks cannot be adequately reveted making it necessary to build external personnel bunkers.

(b) EVALUATION: As a result of recent mortar attacks it has been determined that personnel are likely to be wounded while moving from the barracks to the bunkers. The location of the bunkers should be as close to the building as possible to reduce the exposure time.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: The personnel bunkers should be build immediately adjacent to the barracks with a hole cut in the side of the barracks with a hole cut in the side of the barracks wall permitting personnel from the ground floor to feed directly into the bunker. Other entrances should be located toward each end of the barracks to permit rapid entry of personnel from the top floor.

(3) Personnel Bunkers in Operational Areas

(a) OBSERVATION: Due to operational necessity certain signal personnel must remain in the immediate vicinity of communications equipment during enemy attacks.

(b) EVALUATION: Due to type of construction it has been impossible to completely revet such buildings as Dial Central Offices for the protection of operating personnel and equipment.

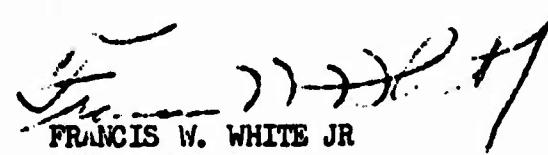
(c) RECOMMENDATION: This unit has found it highly advantageous to construct one or two man sand bag bunkers right in the work area, thus permitting a higher degree of protection to those men who must remain with their equip-

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ment during an attack. The spread of dirt in these areas can be reduced by covering the sand bags with plastic or some other non-porous material.


FRANCIS W. WHITE JR
LTC, SigC
Commanding

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SCCVSG-CO (10 May 68)

1st Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 52d Signal Battalion for Periods Ending
30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

DA, HEADQUARTERS, 2D SIGNAL GROUP, APO 96491 24 May 1968

TO: Commanding General, 1st Signal Brigade (USASTRATCOM), APO 96384

1. Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 30 April 1968 submitted by the 52d Signal Battalion has been reviewed and found to be adequate, with the following comments noted:

a. The 52d Signal Battalion was operational ninety (90) days during the reporting period.

b. Reference para 1a, the 52d Signal Battalion Mission also includes support of all forces as directed by higher headquarters (to include United States troop units and third country forces).

c. Reference para 1c(1) should read 39th Signal Battalion.

d. Reference para 1c(2). The Dong Tam switchboard has since deteriorated; additional supervision and better management of personnel resources is being instituted to improve this switchboard.

e. Reference para 2b(1), Keeping abreast of the situation. Each unit should submit MTOE documents to justify equipment on an individual basis. The situation varies so much throughout the area of responsibility that a blanket authorization would not be advisable.

f. Reference para 2b(4), Buried Cable. Telephone Management Office, this Headquarters is presently implementing a program to bury as much cable as practical.

g. Reference para 2e(1), Keep a POL reserve. Telecon with 52d Signal Battalion on 17 May 1968 indicates that coordination has been effected with logistical support activities to insure operational as well as a backup supply of POL.

h. Reference para 2g(2), Location of Personnel Bunkers. Lines 2 and 3 delete the second "with a hole cut in the side of the barracks."

i. Reference para 2g(3), Personnel Bunkers in Operational Areas. This Headquarters has previously recommended (and in present ORLL submission) that proper physical security be written into Class IV project contracts. Bunkers within the DCO reflect a partial solution to the real problem of overall protection of the DCOs.

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j. Reference para 2g(2), Trouble Shooting oversight. Judgement must be utilized in trouble shooting of equipment; certain major equipments should be changed first according to the nature of the malfunction, but interconnect cables should be changed when the malfunction cannot be iso

k. Reference para 2g(3), Damaged Coax Cable. A T joint is a good field expedient to keep a system on the air when coax cable is not available to replace the damaged cable. However, cabling should be returned to its original configuration at the earliest possible time.

2. I concur in the commander's Observations and Recommendations portions of the report, except as noted above.

DANIEL C. BIRD
DANIEL C. BIRD
Colonel, SigC
Commanding

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SCCVOP-CR (10 May 68) 2d Ind

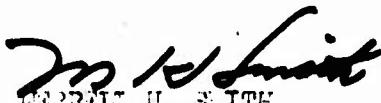
SUBJECT: Operational Report of 52d Signal Battalion for Period Ending
30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

DA, HQ, 1st Sig Bde (USASTRATCOM), APO SF 96384 8 JUN 1968

TO: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVHGC-DST
APO 96375

1. Subject report is forwarded in compliance with USAIV Regulation 525-1.
2. Concur in the Commander's observations, evaluations, and recommendations as indorsed with the following comments:
 - a. Item: Stairway for Two Story Barracks, 2g(1), p.6. The problem of the exit from the standard two story billet was referred to USAECAV in March 1968 for their consideration and possible redesign of the billet.
 - b. Item: Location of Personnel Bunkers, 2g(2), p.9. The bunkers should be situated as closely as possible to the personnel they serve. No general rule can be given as to where exits should be located. A better solution would be to build the bunkers so that they have the easiest possible access to the existing building exits. If the suggested exit holes are used, however, hinged doors swinging out on the exit holes in the barracks wall should be implemented.
 - c. Item: Personnel Bunkers in Operational Areas, 2g(3), p.9, with 1st Indorsement. Based on a 10 April 1968 USAIV indorsement to 1st Signal Brigade Letter, USAIV will now consider protective construction for inclusion in projects. However, it must be included in the DD Form 1391 and be approved and funded. It is conceivable that such work will not be approved for contract construction because of the cost. In such cases self-help would probably then be required. It should also be noted, however, that Class IV Projects cannot be used to provide revetments; these projects are limited to the communication equipment itself. Revetments must be provided as part of the project for the building, either through the NCA program or by self-help construction. The 1st Signal Brigade Engineer has distributed drawings showing recommended designs for revetments.

FOR THE COMMANDER:


CARROLL H. SMITH
LTC, GS
Acting Chief of Staff

Copy furnished:

Commanding General, United States Army Strategic Communications Command,
ATTN: SCCOP, Fort Huachuca, Arizona, 85613

AVHGC-DST (10 May 68) 3d Ind CPT Arnold/hga/LBN 4485
SUBJECT: Operational Report of 52d Signal Battalion for Periods Ending
30 April 1968, RCS CSPOR-65 (RL)

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY, VIETNAM APO San Francisco 96375 14 JUN 1968

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-DT,
APO 96558

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the quarterly period ending 30 April 1968 from Headquarters, 52d Signal Battalion as indorsed.
2. Concur with report as submitted.

FOR THE COMMANDER:


JOHN V. GETCHELL
Captain, AGC
Assistant Adjutant General

Copy furnished:
HQ, 52d Sig Bn
HQ, 1st Sig Bde (USASTRATCOM)

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GPOP-DT (10 May 68) 4th Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 52d Sig Bn for Period Ending
30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (RI)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 29 JUN 1968

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the
Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

This headquarters has evaluated subject report and forwarding indorse-
ments and concurs in the report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

Oliver Short

C.L. SHORT
CPT, AGC
Asst AG

Organization

Headquarters, 52D Signal Battalion

1. Assigned

- a. Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment
- b. Company A
- c. Company B
- d. Company C
- e. Company D

2. Attached

- a. Cryptographic (DISTRA) Detachment, 53rd General Support Group
- b. 1st Platoon, Company A, 40th Signal Battalion
- c. Detachment (Troposcatter and Microwave Radio) 327th Signal Company
- d. Security Section, 1st Signal Brigade
- e. Cable Installation Section, 267th Signal Company, 39th Signal Battalion

Inclosure 1, Operational Report of 52D Signal Battalion for Period Ending
30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

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